

Health and illness I

A Phrasal verbs and verb-preposition collocations for health and illness

I'm **fighting off** a cold at the moment. [trying to get rid of]

Marge isn't in today; she's **gone down with** flu. [has caught, usually a non-serious illness]

I won't be going today. I've **come down with** a dreadful cold. [with I we say *come down* not *go down*]

I had a virus last week, but I **got over** it quite quickly. [got better/recovered]

My sister's **recovering from** a major operation. [getting better: used for more serious illnesses]

Harry **suffers from** hay fever and sneezes a lot if he is near grass or flowers. [used for more long-term problems]

He **died of/from** lung cancer. [Not: He ~~died with~~ lung cancer.]

B Health systems

In Britain, healthcare¹ is paid for through taxes and **national insurance**² payments taken directly from wages and salaries. The government decides how much will be spent on the **National Health Service**³, but a lot of people feel they do not spend

enough. Hospital treatment and visits to a **family doctor** (or GP)⁴ at a **surgery**⁵ or **clinic**⁶ are free, but there is a **prescription charge**⁷. Dentists and opticians charge fees. Private healthcare is available and a large number of insurance schemes exist to enable people to '**go private**'⁸.

¹ general expression for all of the services offered by hospitals, clinics, dentists, opticians, etc.

² tax paid by most adults which covers the costs of healthcare for everyone

³ British name for the service that covers hospitals, clinics, dentists, etc.

⁴ doctor who looks after people's general health: GP means *general practitioner*

⁵ small centre with just two or three doctors

⁶ large centre with several doctors and kinds of services

⁷ charge for the medication the doctor prescribes, which you pay at a pharmacy

⁸ choose private healthcare

C Serious illnesses and health problems

Here are some serious illnesses, with the word-stress underlined. Make sure you know the stress-pattern when learning longer words or phrases. It is a good idea to make a note of it.

diabetes: disease where the body does not properly absorb sugar and starch

bronchitis: inflammation in the breathing system, causing you to cough

heart disease: serious illness connected with the heart which can lead to a heart attack

skin cancer / **lung cancer** / **breast cancer**: harmful tumours in those areas

TB (or **tuberculosis**): infectious disease in the lungs

cholera: an intestinal disease that can be caused by bad drinking water

hepatitis: inflammation of the liver

typhoid: fever, with red spots on the chest and abdomen

heart attack/failure: when the heart fails

Exercises

- 55.1** Which is the odd one out in each group, in terms of the main word stress? Use a dictionary if you are not sure about words which are not on the opposite page.



EXAMPLE tablets medicine prescription (answer: prescription; stress on second syllable)

- 1 diabetes bronchitis cholera
- 2 heart attack sore throat lung cancer
- 3 hepatitis typhoid tuberculosis
- 4 illness disease sickness
- 5 consultant doctor surgeon
- 6 hospital ambulance transfusion
- 7 heart disease surgery TB

- 55.2** Sort these everyday phrasal verbs and expressions connected with health and illness into two groups, depending on whether they have *positive* or *negative* meanings with regard to health. Use a dictionary if necessary.



be poorly	feel a bit under the weather	be over the worst	fight off
be on the mend	be back on one's feet again	get over	come down with

Now fill the gaps using the expressions above.

EXAMPLE [Nurse to visitor in a hospital] 'I'm sorry, Mr Pickering is rather poorly today and we're not allowing visitors.'

- 1 [Someone speaking to a colleague just returned to work after an illness] 'Hello, Frank, good to see you
- 2 [Person ringing their place of work] 'Jo, I won't be in today, I've a cold.'
- 3 [Person in hospital, just beginning to get better, talking to a visitor] 'Oh, I'm OK. I'm now. I still feel bad, but I should be out within a week or so.'
- 4 [Parent to a child with a cold] 'Don't worry, darling. Everyone has a cold now and then. You'll it.'
- 5 [Someone to their partner, who is worried about them] 'Don't worry. It's nothing serious. I'm just feeling, that's all.'
- 6 [Someone ringing a workmate] 'I'm trying to the flu, but nothing seems to help. I don't think I'll be in work tomorrow.'
- 7 Hilary was quite ill last week, but she's now and should be back at work next week.

- 55.3** Which of these collocations are normal, and which are not normal? Correct the inappropriate ones.

- 1 Her mother died with skin cancer.
- 2 Is there a prescription price in your country?
- 3 In Britain, national security is a separate tax from income tax.
- 4 Healthcare is the biggest item in the nation's budget.
- 5 Are there insurance societies for private healthcare in your country?
- 6 Private dentists charge very high fees.
- 7 She suffers of a severe allergy and can't be in a smoky room.